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THE REINFORCEMENT TO FULL STRENGTH OF A THIN SLAB WITH A SLIT

by

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The Reinforcement to Full Strength  
of a Thin Slab with a Slit<sup>1</sup>

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Abstract. A thin slab with a centered slit parallel to an edge of the slab is subjected to uniform tensile stresses across its edges. The material in the slab is assumed to be perfectly plastic and to satisfy Tresca's yield condition. A square reinforcement is designed so that the slit slab will not yield under any load which could be supported by the same slab without a slit.

1. Introduction. Before considering the problem stated in the abstract, it will prove convenient to determine the yield load of a square slab of side 2 and thickness  $h$  with a centered slit of length  $2a$  (Fig. 1). In Sec. 6, it will then be shown that once this problem is solved, the design of a reinforcement for full strength can be completed by elementary calculations.

The analysis will utilize two theorems of Drucker, Greenberg, and Prager [1].<sup>4</sup> Consider first the following definitions.

1. The results presented in this paper were obtained in the course of research conducted under Contract N7onr-35810 between the Office of Naval Research and Brown University.
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4. Numbers in square brackets refer to references collected at the end of the paper.



- a. A statically admissible stress field is a stress field which is piecewise continuous and has continuous tractions across any surface of discontinuity, is in equilibrium with applied loads, and nowhere involves a shearing stress greater than the yield stress  $k$ .
- b. The internal rate of dissipation of energy  $D_1$  is the product of the absolutely greatest principal plastic strain rate by the yield stress:

$$D_1 = 2k \max |\dot{\epsilon}|.$$

- c. The external rate of dissipation of energy  $D_e$  is the rate at which the applied loads do work on their points of application:

$$D_e = \underline{F} \cdot \underline{v}.$$

- d. A kinematically admissible velocity field is any incompressible velocity field for which the total internal rate of dissipation of energy does not exceed the external rate:

$$\int_V D_1 \, dV \leq \int_S D_e \, dS.$$

With these definitions, the theorems of Drucker, Greenberg, and Prager state that:

1. The collapse load is the largest load for which it is possible to find a statically admissible stress field;

2. The collapse load is the smallest load for which it is possible to find a kinematically admissible velocity field.

Observe that any statically admissible stress field furnishes a lower bound on the collapse load, while any kinematically admissible velocity field furnishes an upper bound. In particular, if both a statically admissible stress field and a kinematically admissible velocity field can be found for the same load, this load is the collapse load.

2. Uniaxial tension, upper bound. An upper bound for the slit slab loaded in uniaxial tension perpendicular to the slit can be found by the method used by Hodge and Prager [2] in the discussion of a slab with a circular cutout. To make the present paper self contained the analysis is repeated here.

Let the applied stress be  $2vk$  and consider a discontinuous velocity field in which half of the slab remains at rest while the other half moves out of the plane at  $45^\circ$ , as a rigid body with a velocity  $v$ . Figure 2 shows a cross-section of the slab for such a motion. This may be considered as the limiting case of the continuous velocity field shown in Fig. 3.<sup>5</sup> In the transition region of width  $\beta$  the absolutely greatest principal strain rate is  $v/2\beta$ ; in the remainder of the slab the strain rates vanish.

The total internal rate of dissipation of energy  $\dot{D}_1$  is given by

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5. The triangular regions having an area of  $h^2/2$  are neglected.

$$\mathcal{D}_1 = \int_V D_1 dV = 2 \sqrt{2} k v h (1-a). \quad (2.1)$$

Since this is independent of  $\beta$  it remains valid in the limit as  $\beta \rightarrow 0$ .

The total external rate of dissipation of energy  $\mathcal{D}_e$  is given by

$$\mathcal{D}_e = \int_S \underline{F} \cdot \underline{v} dS = 2 \sqrt{2} v k h v. \quad (2.2)$$

For this velocity field to be kinematically admissible the total external rate of dissipation of energy must be greater than or equal to the internal rate. Thus  $\mathcal{D}_e \geq \mathcal{D}_1$ , or, in view of Eqs. (2.1) and (2.2)

$$v \geq 1 - a. \quad (2.3)$$

Therefore, the collapse load of the slab under uniaxial tension is less than or equal to  $2k(1-a)h$  per unit length.

3. Uniaxial tension, lower bound. A state of plane stress can be described by specifying the two non-vanishing principal stress components and a principal direction. Let  $\theta$  be the smallest non-negative angle between the  $x$  axis and a principal direction,  $s$  the principal stress across an element inclined at an angle  $\theta$  to the  $x$  axis, and  $r$  the other principal stress. The reduced mean normal stress  $\omega$  and the reduced difference between the principal stresses  $\chi$  are then defined by

$$\omega = \frac{1}{2k}(r+s), \quad \chi = \frac{1}{2k}(r-s). \quad (3.1)$$

The normal and tangential tractions across an element inclined

at an angle  $\alpha$  to the  $x$  axis are given in terms of  $\omega$ ,  $\chi$ , and  $\theta$  by

$$(N/k) = \omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha), \quad (T/k) = -\chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha). \quad (3.2)$$

Consider a discontinuous stress field of the type shown in Fig. 4. Due to symmetry, it is necessary to consider only one quarter of the slab. Across AB, the normal traction must equal the applied load  $2\mu k h$  and the shearing traction must vanish. In terms of the variables  $\theta$ ,  $r$ , and  $s$  this requires that  $\theta_1 = 0$  and  $s_1 = 2\mu k$ . The stress  $r_1$  is undetermined. Similarly the fact that no tractions are transmitted across the slit OD, or the side BC leads to  $\theta_4 = s_4 = \theta_3 = r_3 = 0$ . Finally, overall equilibrium of the slab requires that  $s_3 = 2\mu k/(1-a)$ .

The interior components of stress  $r_1$  and  $r_4$  and the three components in region 2 must now be determined. Let  $y = \frac{r_1}{2k}$ ,  $z = \frac{r_4}{2k}$ ,  $\omega = \omega_2$ ,  $\chi = \chi_2$ ,  $\theta = \theta_2$ , and let  $\alpha_{1j}$  be the angle between the  $x$  axis and the line of discontinuity separating regions 1 and  $j$ . From the geometry of Fig. 4,

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \alpha_{12} &= 1 - b, \\ \tan \alpha_{23} &= \frac{1}{1-a}, \\ \tan \alpha_{24} &= -\frac{b}{a}. \end{aligned} \quad (3.3)$$

The continuity of normal and tangential tractions across the lines of discontinuity requires that the following six equations be satisfied:

$$\omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{12}) = y + \mu - (y - \mu) \cos 2\alpha_{12},$$

$$\omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{23}) = \frac{\mu}{1-a} (1 + \cos 2\alpha_{23}),$$

$$\omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{24}) = z(1 - \cos 2\alpha_{24}),$$

$$\chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{12}) = - (y - \mu) \sin 2\alpha_{12}, \quad (3.4)$$

$$\chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{23}) = \frac{\mu}{1-a} \sin 2\alpha_{23},$$

$$\chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{24}) = - z \sin 2\alpha_{24}.$$

Since  $s_3$  was determined so as to satisfy an overall equilibrium condition, only five of Eqs. (3.4) are independent. Their solutions can be seen to be

$$\tan 2\theta = \frac{2a}{\delta + a(1-a)},$$

$$\chi = - \frac{\mu \sqrt{[\delta + a(1-a)]^2 + 4a^2}}{a + \delta(1-a)}$$

$$\omega = \frac{\mu[\delta - a(1-a)]}{a + \delta(1-a)} \quad (3.5)$$

$$y = \frac{\mu a}{1 - \delta}$$

$$z = - \frac{\mu a}{\delta}.$$

As a check it will be noted that the total traction across OA vanishes.

In the present notation the yield condition of Tresca may be written

$$|r| \leq 2k, \quad |s| \leq 2k, \quad |\chi| \leq 1. \quad (3.6)$$

If the above stress field is to be statically admissible the six Inequalities (3.6) must be satisfied throughout the plate. In each of the four regions the governing inequality is defined as that one which would be violated by the smallest value of  $\mu$ . The substitution of Eqs. (3.5) into the governing inequality of each region leads to

$$\frac{\mu a}{1 - \delta} \leq 1, \quad (3.7)$$

$$\frac{\mu \sqrt{[\delta + a(1-a)]^2 + 4a^2}}{a + \delta(1-a)} \leq 1, \quad (3.8)$$

$$\frac{\mu}{1 - a} \leq 1, \quad (3.9)$$

$$\frac{\mu a}{\delta} \leq 1. \quad (3.10)$$

Solving Inequalities (3.7), (3.8), and (3.10) for  $\delta$  one obtains

$$\delta \leq 1 - \mu a, \quad (3.11)$$

$$\frac{-a(1-a)(\mu^2-1) - \sqrt{a^2(1-a)^2(\mu^2-1)^2 - [\mu^2 - (1-a)^2]\{\mu^2[a^2(1-a)^2 + a^2] - a^2\}}}{\mu^2 - (1-a)^2} \leq \delta, \quad (3.12)$$

$$\mu a \leq \delta. \quad (3.13)$$

In addition it follows from the geometry of Fig. 4 that

$$0 \leq \delta \leq 1. \quad (3.14)$$

Except for the restrictions of Inequalities (3.11) through (3.14),  $\delta$  is arbitrary. A necessary and sufficient



condition that there exists some value of  $\delta$  satisfying all these inequalities is that each lower bound on  $\delta$  be less than or equal to each upper bound. Since  $\mu$  and  $a$  are positive, the resulting six inequalities are all satisfied provided that

$$\mu \leq \frac{1}{2a}, \quad (3.15)$$

$$f(\mu) = a^2\mu^4 - 2a(1+a-a^2)\mu^3 + (1+2a+2a^2)\mu^2 + 2a(1-a)\mu - 1 \leq 0. \quad (3.16)$$

Further, Inequality (3.15) is seen to be satisfied whenever (3.9) is satisfied.

The polynomial  $f(\mu)$  is increasing in the interval  $0 \leq \mu \leq 1$ . Indeed, since

$$f'(\mu) = 4a^2\mu^3 - 6a(1+a-a^2)\mu^2 + 2(1+2a+2a^2)\mu + 2a(1-a), \quad (3.17)$$

and since for  $0 \leq a \leq 1$ , it is easily shown that

$$2(1+2a+2a^2) > 6a(1+a-a^2), \quad (3.18)$$

the derivative is positive and the conclusion follows. Thus, in the interval  $0 \leq \mu \leq 1 - a$ ,

$$f(\mu) \leq f(1-a) = -a^3(2+2a-4a^2+a^3) < 0, \quad (3.19)$$

so that (3.16) is satisfied by any value of  $\mu$  satisfying (3.9).

Therefore, the above stress field will be statically admissible provided only that the load is less than or equal to  $2k(1-a)h$  per unit length. Since this is the same as the upper bound found in the previous section, the collapse load per unit length under uniaxial loading perpendicular to the slit is

$$hT_y = 2k(1-a)h. \quad (3.20)$$

4. Uniform biaxial tension. The upper bound obtained in Sec. 2 is also valid for the case of biaxial tension, since the side loads do no work. A lower bound is obtained by the same method as in Sec. 3. The stress field is shown in Fig. 5, where the values of the quantities which may be determined by inspection are specified. With the definitions of Sec. 3, the equilibrium conditions across the lines of discontinuity lead to

$$\begin{aligned} \omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{12}) &= y + \mu - (y - \mu) \cos 2\alpha_{12}, \\ \omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{23}) &= \frac{\mu(2-a)}{1-a} + \frac{\mu a}{1-a} \cos 2\alpha_{23}, \\ \omega - \chi \cos 2(\theta - \alpha_{24}) &= z(1 - \cos 2\alpha_{24}), \\ \chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{12}) &= - (y - \mu) \sin 2\alpha_{12}, \\ \chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{23}) &= \frac{\mu a}{1-a} \sin 2\alpha_{23}, \\ \chi \sin 2(\theta - \alpha_{24}) &= - z \sin 2\alpha_{24}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.1)$$

The solution of Eqs. (4.1) is found to be

$$\begin{aligned} \tan 2\theta &= \frac{2}{b-a}, \\ \chi &= -\mu \frac{a \sqrt{(b-a)^2 + 4}}{a + b(1-a)}, \\ \omega &= \mu \frac{a^2 + b(2-a)}{a + b(1-a)}, \\ y &= \mu \frac{a + 1 - b}{1 - b}, \\ z &= \mu \frac{b - a}{b}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.2)$$

In regions 1, 3, and 4 the governing inequalities are found to be

$$\begin{aligned}\mu \frac{a + 1 - b}{1 - b} &\leq 1, \\ \mu \frac{1}{1 - a} &\leq 1, \\ \mu \frac{|b - a|}{b} &\leq 1,\end{aligned}\tag{4.3}$$

while in region 2,

$$\mu \frac{a \sqrt{(b-a)^2 + 4}}{a + b(1-a)} \leq 1 \quad \text{if} \quad 0 \leq b \leq a, \tag{4.4}$$

but

$$\frac{\mu}{2} \cdot \frac{a^2 + b(2-a) + a \sqrt{(b-a)^2 + 4}}{a + b(1-a)} \leq 1 \quad \text{if} \quad a \leq b \leq 1. \tag{4.5}$$

It is found that if  $b$  is taken equal to  $a$ , the resulting inequalities are all satisfied provided that

$$\mu \leq 1 - a. \tag{4.6}$$

Since this is the same as for the upper bound, the collapse load per unit length for uniform biaxial loading is

$$hT_x = hT_y = 2k(1-a)h. \tag{4.7}$$

It is interesting to note that the stress field obtained by setting  $b = a$  in Eqs. (4.2) yields

$$r_4 = 2kz = 0 \tag{4.8}$$

so that region 4 is stress free. It follows that the yield load for a square slab with a square diamond cut-out (Fig. 6) under biaxial tension is also given by Eq. (4.7).

5. Other loadings. If the slab is loaded in uniaxial tension parallel to the slit, the slit will have no effect, so that the collapse load is

$$hT_x = 2kh > 2k(1-a)h \quad (5.1)$$

per unit length. Further, statically admissible stress fields obviously exist for compressive loads which are equal in magnitude to the admissible tensile loads already considered.

An argument used by Hodge [3] now shows that if  $(hS_x, hS_y)$  represents any load per unit length which can be carried without yielding by the unslit slab, the slab with a slit will support the load per unit length

$$hT_x = S_x(1-a)h, \quad hT_y = S_y(1-a)h. \quad (5.2)$$

To see this, observe first that the loads  $S_x, S_y$  may be represented in a loading space by the hexagon ABCDEF (Fig. 7). Thus, it is desired to show that for any load in the hexagon abcdef a statically admissible stress field exists.

Any point on the hexagon abcdef can be represented as a linear combination of some two of the vertices of the form

$$\underline{X} = \beta[\alpha \underline{a}_1 + (1-\alpha)\underline{a}_2] \quad 0 \leq \alpha \leq 1, \quad 0 \leq \beta \leq 1. \quad (5.3)$$

Here  $\underline{X}$  represents the vector from the origin to a point on the hexagon and  $\underline{a}_1$  and  $\underline{a}_2$  represent vectors from the origin to some two of the six vertices. Since statically admissible stress distributions exist for the loads represented by the vertices, if at any point in the slab, for the load represented by  $\underline{X}$ , the stress

distribution corresponding to (5.3) is taken, it follows from the convexity of the yield surface that the resulting stress distribution will be statically admissible.

6. Reinforcement of the slab. In this section it will be shown how the results previously obtained can be used to determine the dimensions of square reinforcements welded to the sides of the slab so that the reinforced slab (Fig. 8) will be able to carry any load which could be carried by the unslit slab. The reinforced slab is assumed to be in a state of generalized plane stress.

Let the edges of the slab be loaded with loads  $hS_x$ ,  $hS_y$  per unit length (Fig. 8). In the part of the slab not covered by the reinforcement, the constant stress field

$$\sigma_x = S_x, \quad \sigma_y = S_y \quad (6.1)$$

is in equilibrium with the given loads, and will be statically admissible if the unslit slab could carry the given loads. This stress field will transmit the tractions  $hS_x$ ,  $hS_y$  per unit length to the reinforced part of the slab.

From the previous section, it is known that the reinforced part will not yield provided that the edge loads per unit length are not greater than  $(\frac{b-a}{b})HS_x$ ,  $(\frac{b-a}{b})HS_y$ . Therefore, it follows that a statically admissible plane stress field for the entire slab can be found, provided that

$$\frac{H}{h} \geq \frac{b}{b-a} . \quad (6.2)$$

To show that this is the least reinforcement which will be safe for all loadings, it is necessary to consider only the kinematically admissible velocity field associated with uniaxial loading perpendicular to the slit. An analysis similar to that of Sec. 2 shows that for a load  $hTy$ ,

$$\frac{H}{h} \leq \frac{b}{b-a} + \frac{(Ty/2k) - 1}{b-a} . \quad (6.3)$$

In particular, if  $Ty = 2k$  (full strength), then Inequalities (6.2) and (6.3) show that the thickness ratio for a square of given side  $b$  is

$$\frac{H}{h} = \frac{b}{b-a} . \quad (6.4)$$



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2. P. G. Hodge, Jr., and W. Prager, Limit design of reinforcements of cut-outs in slabs, Tech. Rep. B11-2, Contract N7onr-35810, Brown University, Providence, R. I., (1951).
3. P. G. Hodge, Jr., Upper and lower bounds on the yield load of a square slab with a centered circular cut-out, Tech. Rep. B11-7, Contract N7onr-35810, Brown University, Providence, R. I., (1952).

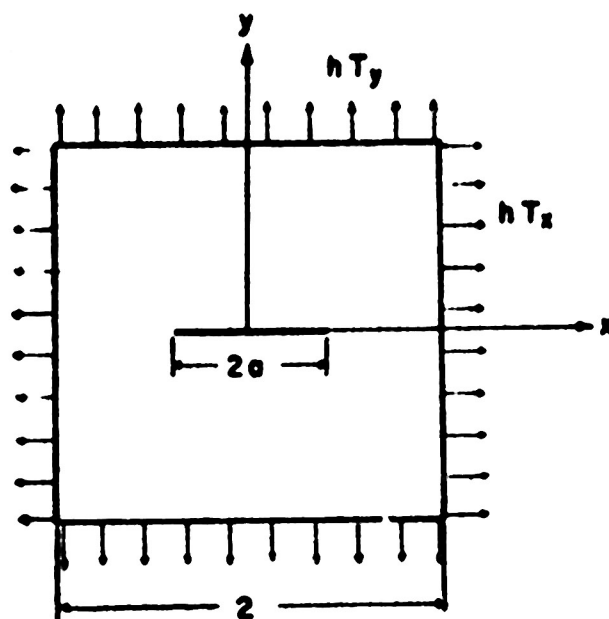


Fig. 1. Unreinforced slab with slit.

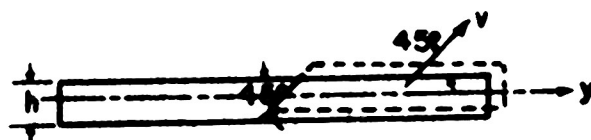


Fig. 2. Discontinuous velocity field.

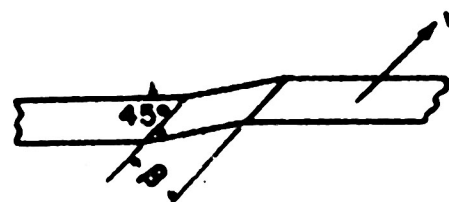


Fig. 3. Continuous velocity field.

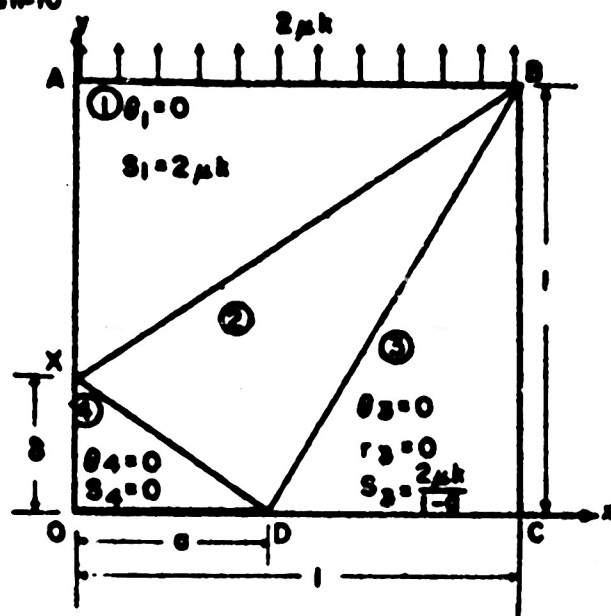


Fig. 4. Discontinuous stress field,  
uniaxial tension.

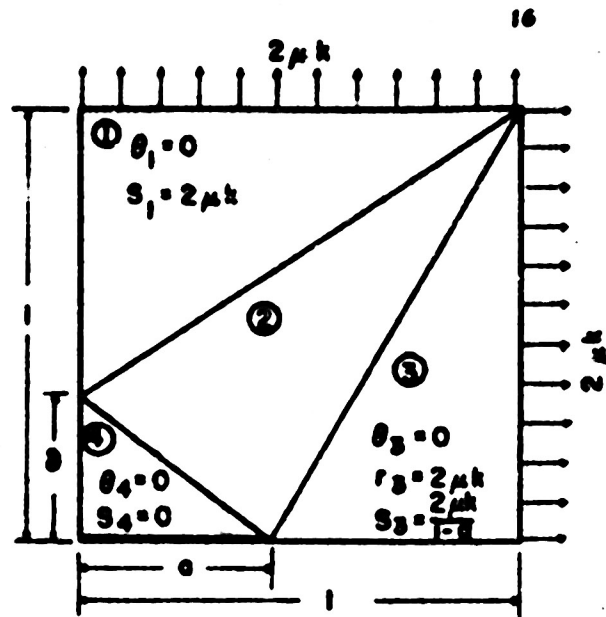


Fig. 5. Discontinuous stress field,  
biaxial tension.

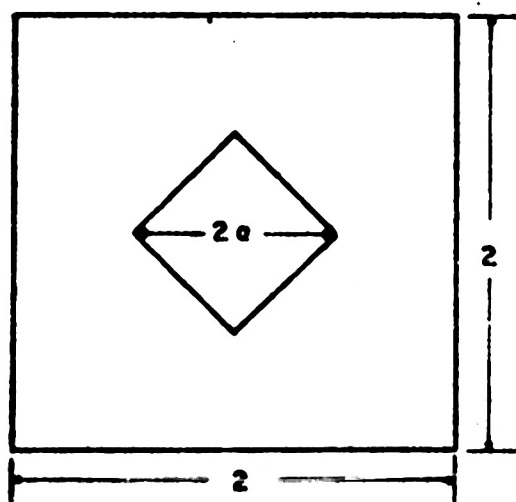


Fig. 6. Slab with diamond  
cut-out.

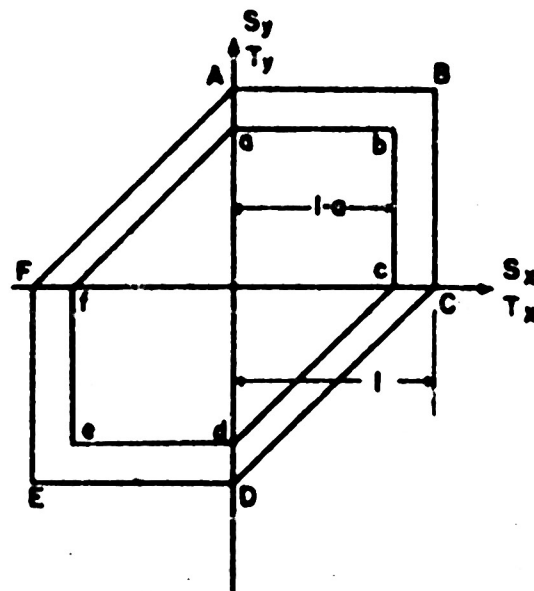


Fig. 7. Load hexagons.

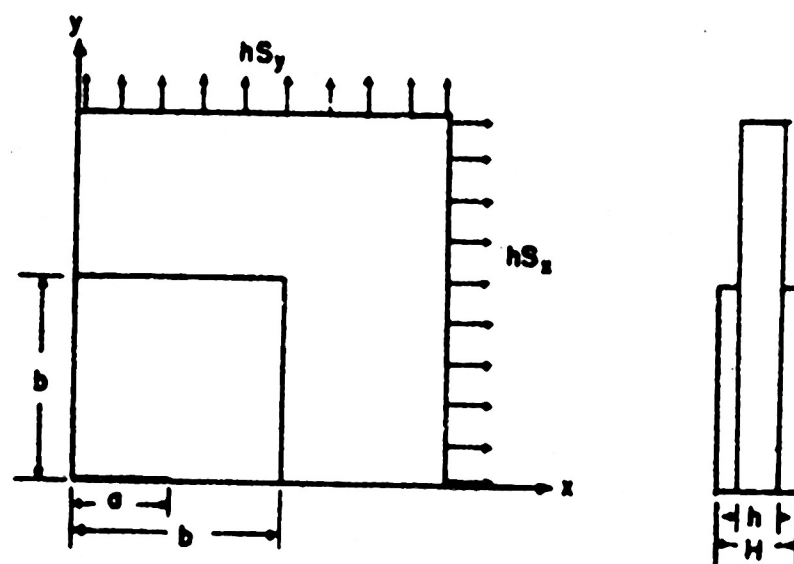


Fig. 8. Reinforced slab.

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